

Editing Wikis



Introduction

Editing a wiki, (especially one as complex as Wikipedia), is not a difficult process once you get the hang of things, but it does have a bit of a learning curve. It is easy to get started, but as you get involved in the more complex aspects of layout, you may find that a quick primer is of value.

Although this document is primarily aimed at anyone interested in the Wikimedia Foundation's projects, such as Wikipedia, Wikinews, Wikisource and Wikibooks, it is not exclusively so: while some aspects may be specific to those projects, (with a focus on the English language Wikipedia), most of these instructions will be equally valuable on a wide range of different wikis.

Editing

When first editing on Wikipedia, the best place to start is the Sandbox. The Sandbox can be found at:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Sandbox>

Given that changes to a wiki are immediately visible, it is a good idea to get some practice before editing the encyclopaedia proper. To start, click on "Edit" at the top of the page, scroll down to the input box, and make your changes. Selecting "Show Preview" will let you check your changes before you save them, and "Save" stores your changes for all to see. And don't forget to explain what changes you made in the Edit Summary, as this will make it easier for people to know what was done.

A wiki can only accept plain text. Which is good, because when making simple alterations, such as spelling corrections, that is all we need to use. However, a problem emerges when we

want to add special formatting - if only plain included, how do we italics, or

text can be add bold, headings? The answer is that we use normal characters in special ways.

For example, to use italics we add two apostrophes " to the beginning of the text, and two more at the end. The wiki will hide the apostrophies from view, and thus "'This is italics" will be displayed as *This is italics* when shown as part of the article. Similarly, three apostrophes indicates bold text, and five apostrophes (""") indicates text which is both bold and italic.

Headings are handled through the use of the equals sign. Two equals signs, such as ==Heading== will display the text as a major, top-level heading. Three equal signs (===Heading===) will display it as a smaller, second-level heading, and four will make a minor heading. Headings serve a number of different functions: they make the text easier to read; they allow you to edit a single subsection rather than the page as a whole; and they are used to produce an automatic Table of Contents.

Other common formatting requests include: indenting text (:); bullet points (indicated with a *); and numbered points (using a #). Each of these only work when added at the beginning

Useful Links

- <http://enwp.org/Help:Contents>
- <http://enwp.org/Wikipedia:Cheatsheet>
- http://enwp.org/Help:Wiki_markup
- <http://enwp.org/Wikipedia:Ref0b>
- http://enwp.org/Wikipedia:Picture_tutorial
- <http://enwp.org/Help:Tables>
- http://enwp.org/Editing_Wikitext

of a line, but they have the advantage of working together: for example, `:::` will indent three tabs.

Links are another important part of wikis, and here you have two options: internal links, which link to another page in the wiki, and external links, which link to a different page on the web. For the former, you employ double square brackets. Thus `[[Australia]]` will link to the article on Australia, and `[[Australia|Terra Australis]]` will also link to Australia, but it will display the text "Terra Australis" when doing so. For URLs you employ a single set of square brackets: `[http://wikimedia.org.au/ Wikimedia Australia]` will link "Wikimedia Australia" to the WMAU website.

Images and References

Adding images to an article is a bit trickier. Assuming that the file has been uploaded, the primary method is to use double square brackets around the file name: `[[File:File:Tree Dragon444.jpg]]` will insert the photo from the front of this pamphlet. However, if you do that,

there will be no caption, and the image itself will be the original size - which in this case is far too big for an article. Thus typically more information is included: `[[File:File:Tree Dragon444.jpg|thumb|right|Tree Dragon|alt=A Tree Dragon lizard, looking left with a long tail, sitting on an old log]]` will add the image, display it as a thumbnail, position it on the right side of the screen, add "Tree Dragon" as the caption and provide alternative text for people with vision impairments.

Content on Wikipedia needs to be verifiable, and for this we need to add references. One approach is to use `<ref></ref>` tags. Anything between the tags will constitute the reference. So to reference this sentence, you add the tags at the end: `<ref>"Editing Wikis" (2011) Wikimedia Australia</ref>` You may also need to include `<references />` at the end of the article, (if it is not there already), to make your references visible.

Quick Reference

Formatting

Italics	<code>"text"</code>	Text
Bold	<code>'''Text'''</code>	Text
Bold + Italics	<code>''''Text''''</code>	Text
Indent	<code>:Text</code>	Text
	<code>::Text</code>	Text
Bullet point	<code>*Text</code>	• Text
	<code>**Text</code>	• Text
Numbered point	<code>#Text</code>	1 Text
	<code>#Text</code>	2 Text
	<code>##Text</code>	1 Text
Headings	<code>==Text==</code>	Text
	<code>===Text===</code>	Text




Links

Internal link	<code>[[Article]]</code>	Article
	<code>[[Article Text]]</code>	Text
External link	URL	URL
	<code>[URL]</code>	[1]
	<code>[URL Text]</code>	Text

References

Reference	<code><ref>Ref 1</ref></code>	[1]
	<code><ref name="x">Ref 2</ref></code>	[2]
	<code><ref name="x" /></code>	[2]
Reference list	<code><references /></code>	1. ^ Ref 1

Images

Image	<code>[[File:Example.png]]</code>	
	<code>[[File:Example.png left]]</code>	Text
	<code>[[File:Example.png Cap]]</code>	
	<code>[[File:Example.png thumb]]</code>	Cap
	<code>[[File:Example.png 300px]]</code>	

Discussions

Signature	~~~~	User (Talk) 12:00, 22 May 2011
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Banner image: A Tree Dragon or Jacky lizard (*Amphibolurus muricatus*). Photo by Benjamint444, October 2007. Released under Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported.

Example image by Cntrx, August 2007. Released under GNU FDL 1.2 & Creative Commons Attribution Share Alike 3.0.